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Agenda item 86

Reduction of military budgets

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Tetyana **Pokhval'ona** (Ukraine)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled:

"Reduction of military budgets:

"(a) Reduction of military budgets;

"(b) Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures"

was included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolutions 35/142 B of 12 December 1980 and 62/13 of 5 December 2007.

2. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 5 October 2009, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 86 to 103. The general debate on those items was held at the 2nd to 8th meetings, from 5 to 9 and on 12 October (see A/C.1/64/PV.2-8). The Committee also held 10 meetings, from 13 to 16 and from 19 to 23 October, for an exchange of views with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials, as well as panel discussions with independent experts and follow-up to resolutions and decisions adopted at the previous sessions (see A/C.1/64/PV.9-18). Thematic discussions on the items were held, and draft resolutions were introduced and considered, at the 9th to 18th meetings, from 13 October to 16 and from 19 to 23 October (see A/C.1/64/PV.9-18). Action on all draft resolutions was taken at the 19th to 23rd meetings, from 27 to 30 October and on 2 November (see A/C.1/64/PV.19-23).

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4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures (A/64/113 and Add.1).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.43

5. At the 15th meeting, on 20 October, the representative of Germany, on behalf of Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zambia, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures" (A/C.1/64/L.43). Subsequently, Andorra, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Comoros, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, San Marino, Thailand and Timor-Leste joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the 20th meeting, on 28 October, the Secretary of the Committee made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General concerning the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.43.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.43 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/72 of 4 December 1998, 54/43 of 1 December 1999, 56/14 of 29 November 2001, 58/28 of 8 December 2003, 60/44 of 8 December 2005 and 62/13 of 5 December 2007 on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures,

Recalling also its resolution 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, which introduced the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, its resolutions 48/62 of 16 December 1993, 49/66 of 15 December 1994, 51/38 of 10 December 1996 and 52/32 of 9 December 1997, calling upon all Member States to participate in it, and its resolution 47/54 B of 9 December 1992, endorsing the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters and inviting Member States to provide the Secretary-General with relevant information regarding their implementation,

Noting that since then, national reports on military expenditures and on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters have been submitted by a number of Member States belonging to different geographical regions,

Convinced that the improvement of international relations forms a sound basis for promoting further openness and transparency in all military matters,

Also convinced that transparency in military matters is an essential element for building a climate of trust and confidence between States worldwide and that a better flow of objective information on military matters can help to relieve international tension and is therefore an important contribution to conflict prevention,

Noting the role of the standardized reporting system, as instituted through its resolution 35/142 B, as an important instrument to enhance transparency in military matters,

Conscious that the value of the standardized reporting system would be enhanced by a broader participation of Member States,

Noting that the continuing operation of the standardized reporting system should be reviewed with a view to improving its further development and to broadening participation in it,

Welcoming, therefore, the report of the Secretary-General[1] on ways and means to implement the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters, including, in particular, how to strengthen and broaden participation in the standardized reporting system,

[1] A/54/298.

Recalling that the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters recommended certain areas for further consideration, such as the improvement of the standardized reporting system,

Noting the efforts of several regional organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures, including standardized annual exchanges of relevant information among their member States,

Recalling the establishment of a group of governmental experts, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to review the operation and further development of the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, commencing in 2010, taking into account the views expressed by Member States on the subject and the reports of the Secretary-General on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures,[2]

Emphasizing the continuing importance of the Standardized Instrument under the current political and economic circumstances,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to report annually to the Secretary-General, by 30 April, their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available, using, preferably and to the extent possible, the reporting instrument[3] as recommended in its resolution 35/142 B or, as appropriate, any other format developed in conjunction with similar reporting on military expenditures to other international or regional organizations, and, in the same context, encourages Member States to submit nil returns, if appropriate;

2. *Recommends* the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters to all Member States for implementation, fully taking into account specific political, military and other conditions prevailing in a region, on the basis of initiatives and with the agreement of the States of the region concerned;

3. *Encourages* relevant international bodies and regional organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures and to enhance complementarities among reporting systems, taking into account the particular characteristics of each region, and to consider the possibility of an exchange of information with the United Nations;

4. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General;[4]

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General, within available resources:

(a) To continue the practice of sending an annual note verbale to Member States requesting the submission of data to the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, together with the reporting format and related instructions, and to publish in a timely fashion in appropriate United Nations media the due date for transmitting data on military expenditures;

(b) To circulate annually the reports on military expenditures as received from Member States, taking into account in his 2010 report the information received from Member States in accordance with paragraph 6 (b) below;

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[2] See resolution 62/13, para. 5.

[3] Available from www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/Milex/html/MilexIndex.shtml.

[4] A/58/202 and Add.1-3, A/59/192 and Add.1, A/60/159 and Add.1-3, A/61/133 and Add.1-3, A/62/158 and Add.1 and 2, A/63/97 and Add.1 and 2 and A/64/113 and Add.1.

(c) To transmit the report of the group of governmental experts to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-sixth session;

(d) To continue consultations with relevant international bodies, with a view to ascertaining requirements for adjusting the present instrument, with a view to encouraging wider participation, and to make recommendations, based on the outcome of those consultations and taking into account the views of Member States, on necessary changes to the content and structure of the standardized reporting system;

(e) To encourage relevant international bodies and organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures and to consult with those bodies and organizations with emphasis on examining possibilities for enhancing complementarities among international and regional reporting systems and for exchanging related information between those bodies and the United Nations;

(f) To encourage the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean to assist Member States in their regions in enhancing their knowledge of the standardized reporting system;

(g) To promote international and regional/subregional symposiums and training seminars to explain the purpose of the standardized reporting system and to give relevant technical instructions;

(h) To report on experiences gained during such symposiums and training seminars;

6. *Encourages* Member States:

(a) To inform the Secretary-General about possible problems with the standardized reporting system and their reasons for not submitting the requested data;

(b) To continue to provide the Secretary-General with their views and suggestions on ways and means to improve the future functioning of and broaden participation in the standardized reporting system, including necessary changes to its content and structure, which could be taken into account by the group of governmental experts during its mandated activity;

7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-sixth session the item entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".